

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-25. (Cancel)

26. (New) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a pattern group generator to generate, on an image forming surface of a photoconductive body, an evaluation chart having a pattern group of one of a plurality of light beams with a phase which is shifted in advance in a main scan direction, with respect to each of a first pattern group and a second pattern group;

a tone sensor to measure a tone of the pattern group in the evaluation chart; and

a phase correcting amount setting circuit to set a phase correcting amount in the main scan direction, based on the tone measured by said tone sensor,

wherein:

in said first pattern, with respect to a row of dots formed in a main scan direction by a predetermined light beam, a row of dots formed by a next light beam is shifted in the main scan direction, and

in said second pattern, with respect to the row of dots formed in the main scan direction by the predetermined light beam, the row of dots formed by the next light beam is shifted in the main scan direction but in a direction opposite to a shift direction of said first pattern.

27. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising:

a phase synchronizing signal generator to generate phase synchronizing signals of the plurality of light beams, based on the phase correcting amount set by said phase correcting amount setting circuit.

28. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein said evaluation chart includes a first pattern group formed by the first patterns which are repeated in a sub scan direction with a period that is an integer multiple of a total number of the plurality of light beams and are also repeated in the main scan direction at predetermined intervals, and a second pattern group formed by the second patterns which are repeated in the sub scan direction with a period that is an integer multiple of the total number of the plurality of light beams and are also repeated in the main scan direction at predetermined intervals.

29. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 28, wherein corresponding first and second pattern groups are arranged adjacent to each other on the evaluation chart.

30. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 28, wherein each first pattern group has a corresponding second pattern group arranged adjacent thereto in both the main scan direction and the sub scan direction.

31. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 26, further comprising:

a controller to variably control conditions related to generating the dots by said pattern group generator when forming the evaluation chart.

32. (New) An image forming apparatus comprising:

pattern group generating means for generating on an image forming surface of a photoconductive body an evaluation chart having a pattern group of one of a plurality of light beams with a phase which is shifted in advance in a main scan direction, with respect to each of a first pattern group and a second pattern group;

tone measuring means for measuring a tone of the pattern group in the evaluation chart; and

phase correcting amount setting means for setting a phase correcting amount in the main scan direction, based on the tone measured by said tone measuring means,

wherein:

in said first pattern, with respect to a row of dots formed in a main scan direction by a predetermined light beam, a row of dots formed by a next light beam is shifted in the main scan direction, and

in said second pattern, with respect to the row of dots formed in the main scan direction by the predetermined light beam, the row of dots formed by the next light beam is shifted in the main scan direction but in a direction opposite to a shift direction of said first pattern.

33. (New) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to carry out an imaging process comprising the procedures of:

causing the computer to generate on an image forming surface of a photoconductive body an evaluation chart having a pattern group of one of a plurality of light beams with a phase which is shifted in advance in a main scan direction, with respect to each of a first pattern group and a second pattern group, so that in said first pattern, with respect to a row of dots formed in a main scan direction by a predetermined light beam, a row of dots formed by a next light beam is shifted in the main scan direction, and in said second pattern, with respect to the row of dots formed in the main scan direction by the predetermined light beam, the row of dots formed by the next light beam is shifted in the main scan direction but in a direction opposite to a shift direction of said first pattern;

causing the computer to measure a tone of the pattern group in the evaluation chart; and

causing the computer to set a phase correcting amount in the main scan direction, based on the measured tone.